



Lake George Association

People Protecting the Lake Since 1885

NEWS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Floating Classroom Back on the Water for its 21st Year – Not Just Kids or Lake Neophytes on Board

Lake George, NY – June 3, 2011 – The LGA's Floating Classroom program, now in its 21st season, is back out on the water again. "Already this summer we've taken out students from Corinth and S. Glens Falls, and later this month, schools from Ticonderoga, Glens Falls, Hadley Luzerne and Hartford will join us," said LGA Executive Director Walt Lender. "Recently we took out a group we've never taken out before, and a group some people might be surprised by – the staff and directors of the Lake George Park Commission (LGPC)," he said.

Early this month, 10 LGPC staff members and commissioners traveled out on the Floating Classroom for a hands-on study of the science of Lake George. Hardly neophytes to the watershed's environmental concerns and problems, LGPC commissioners and staff benefited from this opportunity to leave their desks behind and get out on the Lake together, while also increasing their knowledge of the Floating Classroom program.

"This program is a great resource. It's both educational and fun. Emily DeBolt is a first class instructor, and I was really pleased to hear that virtually every student in the watershed, when they are in 6th, 7th or 8th grade, is getting out on this boat and learning about lake protection. For us here at the LGPC, being out on the Floating Classroom was a great motivator. It was great just to get out on the Lake together, and to remember why it is that we are all working so hard to protect this Lake," said Commissioner Jim Kneeshaw.

"We know that educating our young people about the lake, the natural resources and the concepts of environmental protection is the best way to ensure a healthy future for the lake and our world," said LGPC Executive Director Mike White. "The Floating Classroom is the best of the best programs anywhere," he said.

On board, park commission guests measured the Lake's clarity with Secchi disks, and even tried their hand at capturing zooplankton, the basis of the Lake's food chain. "We like to see a wide variety of plankton because that indicates a reasonably healthy lake environment," said DeBolt. "Our Secchi disk readings confirm Lake George as an oligotrophic lake, meaning it is low in harmful nutrients, high in dissolved oxygen, and able to support a wide variety of life. Secchi readings also indicate the clarity, age and relative health of a lake," she said.

"By making people aware of how humans affect the lake, we hope to bring along a new population of folks interested in good stewardship," said Walt Lender, Lake George Association executive director. "Aboard the Floating Classroom, we bring this message to over a thousand people every season, and it's great that the Park Commission is now more familiar with the program and has a clearer understanding of what we are doing," he said.

A new aspect of the Floating Classroom program this year is educating people about Lake George's most recent threat: the Asian Clam. As the boat returns to its dock at Lower Amherst St., it sails alongside the area where the Asian Clam beds are being covered with benthic mats, and guests can see the mats in the water along the shore. Sometimes guests will see people from the Asian Clam Rapid Response Task Force actively working on the eradication effort. Right now divers are taking water samples from under the mats to see if the oxygen levels are low enough to suffocate the clams.

While most Floating Classroom participants are with a group – either a school, scout troop, homeowners association, or other organization – the LGA will offer Floating Classroom trips for tourists and the general public on Wednesdays this July and August. Reservations requests can be made online or by calling the LGA at 518-668-3558.

(See pictures below.)

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About the Lake George Association

The LGA is a member-supported nonprofit organization. Families, businesses, summer residents and donors support the LGA. Founded in 1885, the Lake George Association is the nation's oldest lake protection organization. Members and friends of the association can:

- Learn more about lake-friendly living;
- Take a trip aboard the LGA's Floating Classroom;
- Subscribe to a free e-newsletter;
- Attend educational outreach presentations;
- Become a citizen scientist or volunteer for stream clean-ups;
- Call the LGA for technical expertise and solutions for low-impact development and landscaping; and
- Learn about LGA stormwater protection projects in their neighborhoods.

The LGA is located on Rt. 9N across from I-87 South Exit 21 in Lake George. For more information the public can call 518-668-3558 or visit www.lakegeorgeassociation.org



Commissioner Tom Conerty speaks with the Floating Classroom Capt. Don Smith



